

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

DIVISION OF BIOLOGY

April 18. 1959

Dear Josh:

Matt Meselson is interested, but is not able to attend the meeting at Pacific Grove. I promised to let him know when we meet again.

I don't mind a 2-day meeting if you can get enough people to come. Let me or Dick know the final decision.

The idea of a detailed prospectus on space biology sounds good for several reasons, among which is the fact that it would help focus our own thinking. I think it could be a useful thing to do.

The following are some points you might consider for the agenda:

1. Roger's promised report on the vertical distribution of spores in the atmosphere. In this connection, is anything being done about collecting samples by sounding rocket? This could be very interesting.
2. Some kind of infra-red measurements will doubtless be among the first "biological" experiments. We should also consider the possibility that additional information might be obtained by observations in the visible and u.v. It may be that nothing can be done in the visible that cannot be done better from terrestrial observatories, but we should be assured about this. I believe that Richardson, who used to be at Mt. Wilson, but is now Ass't. Director of the Griffith Planetarium in Los Angeles, once made some spectroscopic measurements in the visible on Mars. It may not be too late to invite him. He is interested in the life-on-Mars question.
3. In connection with measurements in the u.v., there is the possibility that substances of biological interest fluoresce in the u.v. Since Mars presumably has no ozone, such fluorescence could be detected from outside our ozone screen. Some preliminary laboratory experiments may be indicated here. I vaguely recall that Franck has done something along these lines. Could Kees say something about this?
4. It is not too early to plan experiments to be done on the surface of the moon. Our seismologists are already designing instruments to be placed on the moon. Why not try to get Alter, from the Griffith Planetarium, to come to a meeting? Let's find out if there is a schedule of moonshots for the next couple of years, and what payloads are expected.

Be seeing you,



Norm